



Editorial



Memory and Migration

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In a renowned private university in the capital city of a South American country, thirty-plus audience members have just finished watching a new film. It's the Latin American avant-première, part of a two-day conference on the topic of East Asian and South American relations. The movie, by a Latin American director of Chinese descent, has its official release in South America scheduled for the following month.

It has already come out in Europe, and even snagged a prize in Spain. That has put the wind in its sails. One wonders, if it hadn't won that Spanish award, would it have made it to this meeting of Latin American academics? Would it be premiering in commercial cinemas in Latin America's principal cities?

But no one is asking these questions just now. Dignified, mature people in blazers blink as the lights come up. Some cough, others shift in their seats. It's one of those conferences where the coffee service is only open once the sessions are finished, so no one is prompted to stand or move about while the papers are being delivered.

At the front of the room, three speakers take position with the now-blank screen at their backs. One is the film's non-Asian producer, who explains that he has very little to say except that he apologizes for the busy schedule of the Asian Latin American writer/director who couldn't make it due to a

malfunction in some editing equipment he was using the night before. The other speakers are participants in the conference, specialists in Latin American literature and film, brought together to explore a new interest in Asian or other geographically-distant minority concerns. They discuss the film in relation to new theoretical strategies that privilege the expression and aesthetics of minoritized populations resonating across diverse and divergent national spheres. The producer does not participate in the parlay. A lively exchange ensues with much of the audience, yet after a time it becomes evident that a certain section of the audience is not speaking. In a back corner, four or five scholars sit resolutely silent. Their facial expressions seem to manifest displeasure, some rather ironically, others quite evidently put out. The session ends without any of them having said a word, though their frowns speak volumes.

At the coffee break, one of the academics who had presented a paper analyzing the film's cross-cultural acumen approaches the scholars who had sat in stony silence throughout the panel. She gushes, "Didn't you find that film amazing? And isn't this Asian kid a wonderful director? He's only twenty-four, and he only arrived in this country at twelve! His parents don't even speak the language really. Isn't he amazing?"

They say nothing. She tries a few more comments, queries, finally resorting to asking how the coffee is. They nod a bit, or shake their heads, gesture, nod again. She leaves them be.

At the beginning of the next session, a student raises his hand and requests the microphone. Protocol or not, it's handed to him, and he says: "I have a question about the earlier panel, the one about the movie by a Chinese Latin American film director. All the panelists were Western-looking. And all the audience members who look Asian didn't say a word. I want to know what the Asian professors thought of this new movie."

A funny rippling of energies runs through the room, but settles quickly amid a few snorted laughs, and nervous—or irritated—coughs. The microphone floats around until finally one of the silent scholars grabs it. She clears her throat, and in perfect Spanish she says, "So now you want us to speak as Asians, whereas before you wanted us to listen as Latin Americans. We aren't going to analyze anything about this except how wrong the casting was. The Chinese director wrote a movie about a Korean father and a Korean Latin American daughter. But he should have cast appropriately. The Korean father had a horrible Latino accent, and the daughter—who is supposed to be a native Spanish speaker—could hardly conjugate a verb. I mean, I'm not going to hold any artist to literal representationality, but if even one person in the audience knows the language, that kind of gaff just

blows the whole thing. People get funding for movies; people should use it to cast correctly."

It is duly noted: divisive borders can reassert themselves even when we are advocating transnational work.

This special issue of *Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas*, "Memory and Migration," addresses the ways that polycentric positions and multi-sited locations constitute diasporic cultures. For scholar, cultural theorist, author, and activist Gloria Anzaldúa: "Culture forms our beliefs. We perceive the version of reality that it communicates."¹ Embodied movements, including access to (and restriction of) mobility across geographical terrains, expose the artificiality of society—geopolitical and cultural constructions—whose power differentials often delineate fields of academic knowledge. The academics and artistic practitioners who have contributed to this issue engage polycentric perspectives in order to approach their studies of Asian diasporic

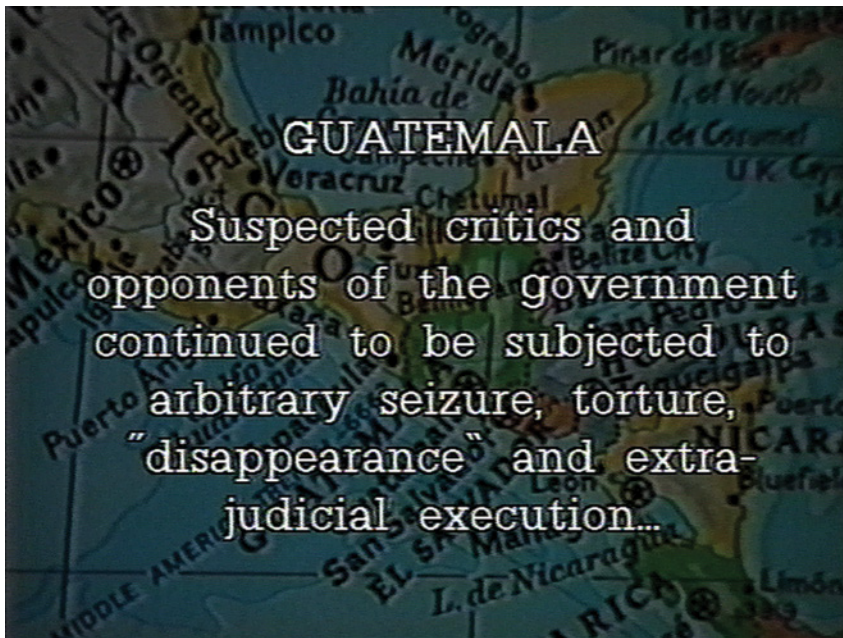


FIGURE 1 *Richard Fung and Peter Steven. Safe Space: A Videotape for Refugee Rights in Canada, 1989. Film (still), 32 minutes.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS.

1 Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999), 38.

movements from different locations within and without academic provinces. Each piece provokes an understanding of necessarily global histories, such as immigration, trade, cultural and literary exchange, and translation, as well as the power dynamics that shape—and are shaped by—practical experiences of language, nation, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, and religion.

Aesthetic and political strategies cut across or combine with a bricolage modality—diverse and multi-sited perspectival nodes—and provide ways of understanding how the pluralism of diasporic practices often renders them unrecognizable within nation-state or area studies frameworks. Shifting the analysis to regional categories—such as hemispheric, transpacific, transatlantic, North-South, and South-South—decentres the production of knowledge from North America or Europe. Furthermore, we suggest that such frameworks must also account for the ways in which diasporic social structures exist in the liquidity of regional boundaries, and in turn are held together by other factors, such as militaristic scars, colonial extraction, and uneven global trade that have put migrations and social structures into flux. The area studies model that governs the organizational logic of the humanities constantly confronts us with the dangers of reproducing knowledge that absents the dynamic experiences of



FIGURE 2 *Richard Fung and Peter Steven. Safe Space: A Videotape for Refugee Rights in Canada, 1989. Film (still), 32 minutes.*

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS.

living in transnational spaces. Yet we also recognize the possibility that diasporic cultures may reproduce existing social relations in new contexts. We are interested in prismatic perspectives that question how visual and literary practices and performance make societal artifice and the normalization of structural inequalities visible. The tendency of area studies to compartmentalize knowledge based on national and regional frameworks confronts us with the diasporic dilemma of never quite “fitting in.” Yet the goal is not to fit into existing categories. Instead, we turn to the idea that cross-border migration and memory shifts one’s positioning, and reveals the way that political power is imposed onto biological bodies in relation to a particular time and place.

On one end of the diasporic spectrum is the global citizen who possesses linguistic and cultural understandings, is recognized as a protected citizen in many places, enjoys ease of transnational mobility, and perhaps even has multiple nationalities. On the other end are the people stripped of citizenship and security, who are forced to migrate away from war, trafficking, enslavement, or violence. What happens to memory on this spectrum of movement? What occurs when memory moves across uneven political and economic terrains? Whose memories matter? How does memory negotiate conflicting—yet historically situated—imaginaries? This special issue features the creative manifestations of memory and migration in visual and literary culture, artistic practice and academic scholarship, and addresses how such works transform, dissolve, reimagine, or sustain the complex exchanges that occur along this spectrum of diaspora.

Harry was a good kid. Did his homework. Was assigned the trumpet in band and did not fight it; he knuckled down and pursed his lips like a duck and dry-spurred into the mouthpiece until he could finally squawk a note or two out of it. He cleaned up after dinner. Kept water in the dog's bowl. Stayed out of his feisty sister's hair. That's where he learned the art of never getting into a fight, of avoiding and eliding and sidestepping and pacifically circumnavigating any potential confrontation. One day the teacher said, "Kids, we're working on identity. Ask your parents what your ethnicity is and pick a flag that shows a part of your identity, your real family origin. Draw it on a piece of poster board and bring it in to show-and-tell." On the school bus, Harry had his poster board rolled up, kept snug with rubber bands. But the girls who sat in front of him grabbed it and took a look. No! "Who are YOU to be using this flag?" They stared at him hard. He shrugged. "You," said one of the girls, Shelly, and flung her curtain of black straight hair back over her shoulder. Her friend, Melanie, glowered under her razor-straight black bangs: "That's MY flag. I'm Melanie Yamamoto." "Yeah," said Shelly, "And

I made the Korean flag because I'm Shelly Kim." "I'm part Japanese," offered Harry meekly, his throat tight from nerves. The girls stared at his loopy blond curls and hazel green eyes. "Oh yeah?" their voices rang out, sending a shrill alert of pre-fight adrenalin through all the kids on the bus, who swung around in their seats, took the scene in lightning-quick and prepared to weigh in against the weakest: "Ha, ha," leered Shelly, "Where, Mr Harold Barnes, are you part Japanese? Huh? On your BUTT?"

Here is another story about mixed heritage in elementary school. Not long ago, an eight-year-old boy—ethnically a quarter Japanese, a quarter German, a quarter English and a quarter Scottish—had trouble with an elementary school assignment. Part social studies and part art, the lesson called for each child to choose a part of their heritage and paint the corresponding flag with tempera colours on a piece of poster board. After the meal, he sat at the dinner table labouring over the widths and angles of the English flag. His older brother gave him a piece of advice: "Don't do the hardest one, are you crazy? Do Obaachan's flag.² It's just one red circle smack in the middle, man. The paper's already white."

The older boy had done that lesson three years before. Same teacher, same assignment, all the same. Except for the boy.

This young fellow looked just like his brother except for one aspect—they had the same nose, the same epicanthic fold, the same high cheekbones and loopy wavy hair, but the younger one was light-coloured: blond hair, green eyes, pale peachy-white skin.

He brought his flag to school. Sat in his regular seat, was called up to the front, and gave his presentation: "Hello. My grandmother is from Japan, so this is her flag, which means it's also my flag. That's it. Thank you very much."

When he got back to his seat, the girls in the next row, Missy Kim and Melody Chang, hit him in the head with their pencil cases. Bam, bang, bonk. "You're not Japanese, you're white," one of them said with genuine spite, authentically outraged, and her friend chimed in, with more venomous righteousness still: "And you know what else you are?" she hissed at him. He looked at her half-Asian, half-Caucasian features, noticing amidst swirling indistinguishable mixed emotions that she actually looked more like his brother than he did. "It's obvious what you are. Picking the easiest flag in the world just because you want to, just because people like you always do whatever they want. Yeah, I know what you are. You. Are. A. Fake! The final indictment was punctuated with a smile.

² Obaachan is Japanese for "grandmother."



FIGURE 3 *Japanese Immigrants disembarking in Port of Santos, in Brazil, year 1937 or 1938.*

SOURCE: MUSEU HISTÓRICO DA IMIGRAÇÃO JAPONESA, BRASIL.

A targeted indictment may sometimes miss its target. A polycentric approach may provide new ways to examine how one is interpellated into existing racialized systems. In this way, a polycentric perspective may be likened to how one uses a compass. One must orient the compass arrow to the North in order to situate the other cardinal points. In this analogy, to mark a targeted indictment, one must first orient the arrow to a specific canon that composes bodies of knowledge and bodies as signifiers for political agendas. Discussions of transatlantic circuits of trade and human labour have historically focused primarily on anglophone North American intersections. Likewise, the shift to transpacific histories turns its attention more broadly to Asian empires, and Japanese imperialism, for example. As Naoki Sakai discusses in his article for this issue, from a Latin American perspective, revisiting Asian and Latin American convergences entails examining the microphysics of power relations – the power differential among multiple imperialist and capitalist endeavours that occupy a given place. In our analysis of Latin American and

Asian convergences, this includes the postcolonial residue of the Iberian Empires, Japanese imperial expansion in the Americas, the neoliberal policies of free trade championed by the United States, and various dictatorships. Studies of Asia and Latin America need a polycentric approach whose fulcrum shifts and reorients according to a relational position.

A young woman born and raised near Boston makes it into the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and graduates. Her South Korean immigrant family is thrilled. Her major? English. Her parents and grandparents, having immigrated in staggered and difficult bouts, but now settled quite comfortably and living within a few blocks of each other in Greater Boston, beam with pride at their progeny's achievement and promising future. She will be an English teacher. This is repeated and reported back "home" by phone with a lightly condescending, haughty tone: "Change homes if you dare; try to make it here if you dare; try to come on over like we did and let's just see if your daughter/son has the skills, let's just see. Or not. So, stay back there. Okay, so nice talking to you. Say hello to grandparents and the little ones. Bye, bye."

The woman, our first-generation Korean North American, does not become a teacher. She applies to graduate school, hoping to do something meaningful, with a long reach, by bringing history and anthropology to bear on literature and the arts. She has a secret interest in the cultural anthropology of cooking, particularly of pickling, but she sticks to the novel as a genre and the cross-cultural mediation that twentieth-century Asian American novelists have to undertake in order to express their cultural values and quirks within the Western/Northern convention of linear progressive structure. Midway through her PhD, having manifested a defensible academic knowledge of English and Korean modern literary modes in narrative, and at the veritable threshold of The Dissertation Idea to pitch to her committee, she decides suddenly that the novel as a focus is hoax, that it throws light on nothing but assimilation, that it's a way of spinning cultural submission as homage. She is done. She tells her advisor that she's decided to go for bilingualism in minority poetry. He sits back, blinking. He says, "I can't guarantee you'll get a job." She leaves his office feeling light as a feather.

She leaves Massachusetts for Lima, Peru. She has stops and starts. Her Spanish improves; her Korean improves as well. She reads and interviews a dizzying number of Peruvian Korean poets. Who would have thought there could be so many?

One day, in a commune where vegetable gardens are harvested, where cucumbers, carrots, cauliflower are all salted, pressed, and set in brine for months—that is to say, where they are pickled—she meets with a famous

deceased poet's sister, who is slightly older than she is, Asian or part Asian, swarthy. The older woman laughs. She says: "You're asking what I am, right? I know. My brother taught me to catch that gaze and know it, name it. You're asking what I am, and I'm going to refuse to say." Our protagonist, the foreigner (doubly so, as an academic and non-Peruvian), does not deny or admit. She does not say, "Oh, you're right, I'm ashamed to be found out," or "Oh, you're right, how clever..." She says nothing, but gifts her interlocutor a smile. "Well," says the poet's sister, lightening up, "my brother would never have told you, but what the hell, I can, and I will. We're half-Japanese and half-Quechua."

The brother was long dead. He had never admitted any ethnicity. He always said he was Peruvian. His Spanish poetics, mixed with other sensibilities, had been parsed out by academics in both extremes of the hemisphere. He'd been awarded prizes, he'd been translated, he'd been the subject of dissertations, book-length treatises, he'd been focused on from Freiburg, Ithaca, Tokyo, Chicago, the Distrito Federal, Madrid, etc., etc. But he had never said he was Japanese or Quechua.

His sister laughed, unjarred the pickles, shared them with our protagonist, who then began, over vinegar and brine-softened seeds, to translate him, to carry him swaying like a baby between Spanish and English, never to be stably settled in either language fully, given the lumpiness of other codes bumping in, the elbows and feet of other sensitivities and other foci of attention marking shapes outside the Western-Northern womb. In Peru she translated three of his books over several years, continued while back in Massachusetts, and once while visiting the poet's sister in Portugal. The more she worked, the more she felt she was translating what was never entirely in one language into what would never entirely fit in the other. Her English versions, set on the page line for line alongside the original, were unstable, flighty, porous—just as his poetics were.

And she offered her translations, the bilingual editions, to a free, online venue.

And she offered her translations, the bilingual editions, to a New York publisher (who refused on commercial grounds, and due to "the identity of our House").

And she offered her translations, the bilingual editions, to an independent ethnic studies venue. And they published the work, but once published it was completely unlike what she had done. It was altered; it had been vaccinated, smoothed, stabilized.

When she asked – after her outrage subsided enough to speak in civil tones on the telephone, why they'd made these unauthorized changes without her consent, they said, "What are you talking about, unauthorized

changes? This is editing, it's professional, and it's done in alignment with the identity and mission of the publishing house. This is an Asian American publishing house. And we are proud to have you among our circle." She felt the impact in her gut. She felt immediately how little choice she had in the matter. No choice at all in how this would be presented to the public. What did she do? She—and the poet's sister, who joined her in the gambit—made ready to go to court.

A polycentric, multi-sited approach offers a modality through which to examine the regenerative power that emerges from imperial desires and the insatiable lust for capitalist expansion that sustain and are sustained by normalized economic and social inequalities. When Spanish and Portuguese explorers arrived on the continent that they renamed America, they were in search of the natural and cultural materials of China, Japan, and India. In 1492, when Christopher Columbus arrived in Hispaniola, he thought he had arrived in Asia. In 1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral and his fleet became the first Europeans in Brazil. Shortly thereafter, they set sail for India via the Cape of Good Hope. Subsequently, the establishment of the Manila Galleon Trade created trade ports in the Philippines for the Spanish Empire and linked Manila with Acapulco and other Spanish colonies in the Americas. Likewise, the *Carreira da Índia*—the global trade route led by the Portuguese empire—not only facilitated migration among Portuguese settlements in Macau, Goa, East Timor, the African coast, and Brazil, but the processes of trade, settlement, migration, and religious conversion connected the Portuguese theological-political imaginary across once-distant lands.

Columbus—and explorers like him—was a prisoner to the imperial imagination. He was held captive by the fantasies of expansion, a delirious vision that led him to confuse the people and cultures of different continents. Columbus' error, Lourdes Arizpe contends, is myth, prophecy, and prison: "Error que es mito, que es profecía, que es prisión."³ The desire for imperial expansion produced the myth of America, but this invention soon became prophecy vis-à-vis colonialism, and ideological imprisonment in which imperial imaginaries normalized the idea of European superiority. That is, a fundamental part of colonial practice was to produce binary constructions out of the complexity of unfamiliar social systems. Gendered, racialized, and infantilized depictions became inextricable from narratives of domination and the imperialist lust for conquest imposed onto the people and cultures of empire's imagined worlds.

3 Lourdes Arizpe, "El, 'indio': mito, profecía, prisión," *América latina en sus ideas*, edited by Leopoldo Zea (Mexico and Paris: Siglo XXI and UNESCO, 1986), 333.

Indeed, the term “developing nations” that is often used to describe Latin American nations retains the paternalistic rhetoric of the colonial period, when theologians referred to these same areas as barbaric, and deemed their inhabitants too childlike to self-govern. The infantilized and gendered rhetoric of underdevelopment is critical to understanding how inhabitants of the Americas entered into the European imaginary as having the potential to one day grow up and inherit European rationale, and thus the ability to develop complex political communities and civilization. Following this line of thinking, Native Americans were likened to the great civilizations of Greek antiquity which produced a temporality that sets Indigenous societies in the distant, albeit glorious, past and thereby positioned Europe as the future of that great civilization.

In 1550, in the Spanish Court in Valladolid, Spain, Juan Ginés de Sepulveda—a humanist lawyer and historian for Charles V—championed Spanish conquest of the Americas. In a debate with the Dominican priest Bartolomé de las Casas, who advocated for better treatment and peaceful conversion of Indigenous peoples, Sepulveda deemed them not infidels or unbelievers but possessing childlike innocence since they had never received the Word of Christ. Sepulveda’s infantilized depictions gendered the relationship between Indigenous peoples and European settlers such that the latter granted themselves the obligation to act as guardian over the New World and its inhabitants. Sepulveda positioned “Indianness” as tantamount to savagery, immaturity, and even inhumanity:

The Spanish have a perfect right to rule these barbarians of the New World and the adjacent islands, who in prudence, skill, virtues, and humanity are as inferior to the Spanish as children to adults, or women to men, for there exists between the two a great difference as between savage and cruel races and the most merciful, between the most intemperate and the moderate and temperate and, I might even say, between apes and men.⁴

The rhetoric of conquest formulated gendered binaries, in which imperialist endeavours were deemed masculine while the object of imperial desire was designated, all too often through violence, as feminine.

4 Juan Ginés de Sepulveda, “*Democrates Alter Or*, on the Just Causes for War Against the Indians,” *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, Vol. XXI (October 1892), 526. Originally translated for the *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).



FIGURE 4 Oscar Oiwa, *Uji River*, 2015, gold/ silver leaf and oil on canvas, $111 \times 227 \times 333$ centimetres.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

The dichotomous formation of self/Other justified European individuality, constituting non-European people in relation to the creation of the European subject. Subsequently, the fiction of otherness also legitimized and normalized exploitative labour in racial terms, as in the case of African slavery. Cuba and Brazil were the last two places in the hemispheric Americas to abolish slavery in 1886 and 1888, respectively. Cuban elites and politicians turned to coolie labour, which in turn inscribed people from China into existing racial and gendered conditions. Different imperial systems, Lisa Yun explains, not only produced distinct contractual conditions of indenture but also gendered them. Feminized Asian bodies were relegated to subordinate and disempowered positions that took shape in distinct ways in relation to national identity.⁵ The processes that produce national inclusion in a discourse with racial and gendered implications normalize unnatural hierarchies onto biological bodies. Throughout the Americas, the idea of Asia and Asians entered into existing hierarchies of race, gender, and social class in colonial states created and governed by different European empires. Racial and gendered relations took on new but contiguous forms during the consolidation of the nation-state, and they continue to regulate quotidian interactions and terms of inclusion.

5 Lisa Yun, *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 9–10.

At a conference in a contemporary art museum in a major Asian capital, several scholars of North American+Asian descent, North American+European descent, Latin American+European descent, Latin American+Asian descent, and Asians (for whom location, origin, and descent coincide) gather in formal dress, bearing obvious symptoms of jet lag. Coffee is served throughout the proceedings, no questions asked.

Shortly before lunch the third panel of the day is announced as an artists' panel on the topic of global identities and contemporary practices. That seems tame enough. The minute they finish their presentations, however, the panelists are asked: "What is your identity? And how does that play into your artistic practice?" The discussants are attuned to the theoretical stakes and terms of negotiation between mild-mannered accommodation of conflicting perspectives and vilifying, winner-takes-all antagonism.

The artists, though, are nowhere near such a black-and-white zone of excitement and/or acrimony. "What?" they say, looking at each other under the museum's bright stage lights. They are lined up on a narrow stage, softly carpeted, curved at the front, delicately distanced from the front row of ferocious sleep-starved research scholars holding paper coffee cups in the tiered seats of the auditorium.

"My identity? In my artistic practice?"

One of the artists ventures to reply: "I was born in Brazil; that is my identity. I am the son of Japanese who had a son in Brazil. I am a Brazilian who came to Japan when there was a new visa possibility for children of Japanese émigrés. While working in Japan, I started selling paintings. Then I sold more paintings. Then a few museum directors spoke with me, and then also some university professors. Now I am here speaking to all of you."

An audience member asked: "Brazil was in a dictatorship when this artist was a young boy there. Being Asian meant sliding past the focus points discriminating between extremes of Left and Right or Black and White. What does it mean to have been able to develop as an artist in the midst of such extreme social oppositions?"

No one answered.

Another artist explained that in her life she had always been interested in minority communities, in the idea that the community identity of minorities was not forthcoming unless special tools were accorded or afforded with which to articulate—from nothing, from silence, from erasure—that identity. So, she explained, she had worked for different minority communities, making monuments in public spaces that could speak their identities.

Someone immediately said: "How could you have imagined you could express the voice of a minority to which you do not belong?"

That artist had been showing slides of her monumental art pieces in major US cities, occupying hundreds of square feet, expressing the memories of African Americans, of Chicano Americans, of Chinese Americans. She is of Japanese descent.

The questioner reiterated forcefully: "What gave you the right to speak, to create art on behalf of others to whom you do not belong?"

The artist stumbled over her words, but said: "Not belong? I'm not sure that's what matters." There was a rumble, an undercurrent of ideology in discontent.

"What gave you the right? Since you're not of that community?"

As others in the audience—some who knew her personally, and more who had researched her production over the years—began to speak up on her behalf, her own answer was flat-footed, frank, fact-based: "They contracted me. What kind of belonging are you talking about? They called me, they made their choice and their requests, and they gave me a contract I had to sign. So, now my art is theirs. That's what happened. Now, what are you talking about?"

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This is the first issue of *Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas* to focus on Asian Latin American content. This special issue examines the transnational aspects that have produced concrete and imagined exchanges between Asia and Latin America not only as linked by their connection to the Iberian empires, but also in ways that puncture imperial/colonial dichotomies. Naoki Sakai's essay "The West and the Tropics of Area Studies" provides a framework for understanding the designation of Latin America and Asia into "areas." Sakai conveys the ways that the imaginary of geography, as a form of cultural hegemony, produces modernity in relation to colonial modernity. The way in which the delirium of conquest and imperial expansion invented the ideas of Asia and the Americas is also the rationale of how these geographical spaces become recognizable in a relational way to Europe. In both cases, the invention of these spatial boundaries refers to a directional relation between the European viewing subject and a designated object. The designations not only reveal their continuing legacies in the modern international world, but also govern the modalities that organize the modern academy.

Jorge Lúzio's article, "The Orient in the "New World: The *Carreira da Índia* and the Flows between Asia and Portuguese America," addresses the influence

of the Indo-Portuguese trade on colonial Brazilian cultural and visual religious iconography. The circulation of carved ivory Christian figurines showcases the complex global system of early modern trade in which raw materials from the West African coast were shipped to India. Engaging in a complex system of copy and replication, Indian artisans transformed raw materials such as ivory into Christian religious symbols, but due to unfamiliarity with European techniques combined with their own artisanal knowledge, the statues acquired Indian features and cultural elements, such as saris and Asian facial features, replacing the European faces of the saints. Lúzio's study of material culture and artistic technique provides insight into the Portuguese imperial discourse of multiculturalism and expansionism, while at the same time revealing how the hybrid religious object produced ambivalent spaces that disrupt the relational concepts of colonial mimicry and imperial authenticity. By entering into global trade, the Portuguese theological-political state intertwined processes of cultural and market exchange and demand, religiosity, and imaginaries of imperial expansion.

Monica Simas evaluates the temporal and spatial frames that corroborate national frameworks and literary systems in Macau that stem from its unique relationship to Portugal and China. Portuguese is an official language in Macau even though it is spoken by less than one per cent of the population. Macau was the last remaining European colony in Asia under Portugal until 1999 when it became a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. Simas' essay, "Macau: A Plural Literature," argues for the sociology of literary systems that produce specific ethnic and cultural distinctions that are not easily recognizable in geopolitical terms. Her inquiry into what constitutes Macanese literature conceptualizes new modes for understanding literature that are not bound by the concept of a national language. She questions the spatial processes that inscribe literary systems and cultural values to a specific location. Translation and the literary imaginary reveal and shift the power differential inscribed onto existing social and physical spaces, and offer possibilities to imagine new linguistic modes of thought that reconfigure one's relation to locale.

Performance offers another way to understand how musical practice and polyphonic rhythms process the relations of national inclusion and ethnic exclusion. Shanna Lorenz's article, "Kinesonic Repertoire and Racial Discourse in Japanese Brazilian Taiko Practice," argues that practitioners of *taiko* Japanese drumming transmit a gestural vocabulary based on visual cues and sound. The "kinesthetic repertoire" is based on embodied knowledge, gestures, and rhythms that shape Brazilian Nikkei taiko practice, and provides a way to examine how drumming cultures shape notions of Brazilianness and Japaneseness. Lorenz's interviews with practitioners reveal that taiko



FIGURE 5 Montreal Ni-Hao, a performative walking tour of Chinatown, created and performed by Alvis Choi (aka Alvis Parsley) shown second from the left, Hemispheric Institute Encuentro 2014, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST, PHOTO BY ALICE MING WAI JIM.

drumming performance is never far removed from negotiations over Japanese ethnic nationalism and Brazilian national identity. Her article plays a critical role in conveying the nuances within the intertwined histories of race, music, and national identity in Brazil.

Transnational studies of Asian diasporic experiences and intercultural exchanges must also account for the gendered and racialized histories of colonialism and colonial modernity that do not fit neatly into comparative frameworks. Lok Siu's essay, "Hemispheric Raciality: Yellowface and the Challenge of Transnational Critique," addresses Mexican performance artist Jesusa Rodríguez's yellowface performance in the piece *Juana La Larga*. Siu discusses the problematic of US-Mexico power dynamics when confronting racially-charged acts in transnational and multiracial situations. American racial relations are not the same as those in Mexico, and to impose American racial ideas onto different spaces may perform new acts of cultural hegemony that erase local, historical processes of racial formation. Denying the racial history of yellowface performance in the hemispheric Americas as moments of violence and exclusion towards Asians, points to a gap in Mexican history concerning its racialized

populations, including Asians and African Mexicans. While the United States saw a critique of race and ethnicity with the advent of the Third World Strike and the emergence of Ethnic Studies departments in the American academy, Mexico does not share a similar intellectual history and thus has a different approach to racial difference. Siu's essay establishes the grounds to have critical discussions regarding hemispheric raciality and the "conundrum of seeing racial difference but not the power of racialization." Furthermore, Rodríguez's yellowface performance took place in Montreal, within another linguistically and ethnically charged context. Critiques of "North American" hegemonic practices often subsume Canada into US-centric indictments that indiscriminately include Canada.

All of the anecdotes in this introduction are based on actual events. Through interrogating the processes of memory-making to also include the embodied modalities of moving through borders and traversing between remembering and forgetting, reality and imagination, we contend there is an ongoing need to create polycentric platforms to host conversations that do not fit neatly into academic provinces and the organizing logic of area studies. Like musical notation that signals silence as a necessary pause, we offer a momentary rest in order to contemplate the inquietude that unsettles areas, territories, and modalities of knowing and creating.

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